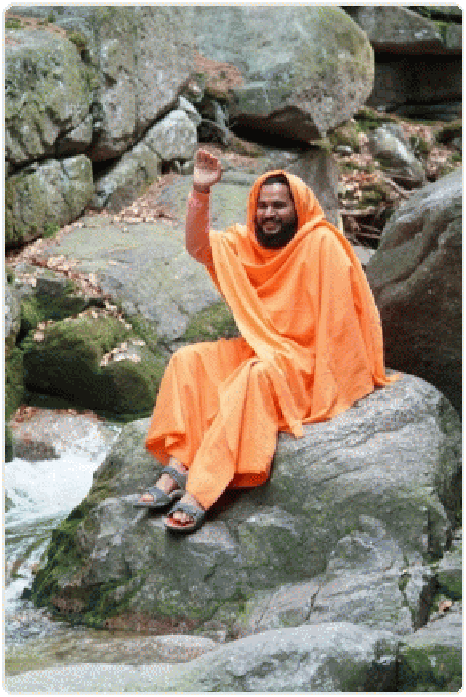
Elements of Spiritual Development

by Swami Suddhananda Giri

- an exalted disciple of H.H. Shri Paramahamsa Swami Hariharananda Giri of Habibpur -

*
_()_

~ Series of six talks given to Kriya Yoga disciples in May 2003 ~



Part – 1
Date: May 29, 2003

OM….OM…..OM…..
Harih OM, Sri Gurobhoyoh namahah
Vande Guru Sri Charanarvindam
Vande Guru Sri Hariharanandam
Vande Guru Sri Charanarvindam
Vande Guru Sri Hariharanandam

Every moment, at the feet of the God, every moment at the feet of the Master, Gurudev.
Every moment to remain at the feet of the God, makes one a devotee.
Every moment to remain at the feet of the Gurudev, makes one a disciple.

The truth is, we are the children of God. Eternally one with God, this is your true identity. 'I am the child of God'— realize this identity. Let us be aware that, 'I am a disciple,' 'I am a devotee.'

Let the 'I' within me be a disciple; let the 'I' within me be a devotee, until I realize that I am the child of God; I am the soul, the Truth.

Spiritual evolution

Life after life, we are all proceeding towards the goal, towards the Truth. It is a natural process of spiritual evolution. Every moment, we are a moment closer to God. Every step, we are a step closer to God. But when you are more and more aware, the speed of the evolution will accelerate. This awareness deepens the desire to realize God; deepens the desire to realize the truth; deepens the willingness to realize the soul; quickens the spiritual evolution and reaching the Goal.

The spiritual life is just a life of awareness: continuous inner awareness. This continuous inner awareness is meditation. With this continuous inner awareness, when you do any action, that action becomes a prayer to God. This continuous inner awareness brings love for God, love for Gurudev, love for this life, love for the truth. When you get the truth, you realize the Truth, the truth of the eternity that, "I am the child of God."

What is spiritual life?

Naturally life is divine; naturally life is spiritual. When you analyze life, you see that we have absolutely no control. We have no control over the life. When and how it came to you, you don't know. When and how it will be taken away from you, you don't know. Nobody knows. This is a complete mystery. Then, what is spiritual practice? — Something over which we have absolutely no control. Then what should we practice? What can we realize? Let this contemplation be continuous in our life. This is spiritual life. A continuous contemplation upon the basic questions: What is life? When and how am I connected with this life? What is the basic purpose of life? When we contemplate on these basic questions of life, this continuous state of questioning leads to a continuous state of awareness.

Becoming a disciple

Ego prevails when whatever you do, there is the sense that 'I am doing,' 'I am speaking,' 'I am happy,' 'I am unhappy.' In spiritual life, when you are aware that 'I am a disciple,' this awareness immediately brings a state of inner contemplation; a series of contemplations. Gurudev used to say, "It is not you, it is the power of God. Watch Him in every breath." So, when the master declares it is not you, it is the power of God, then you are to seriously and deeply contemplate. Before attaining the state of continuous awareness, there is one state of serious deeper contemplation. This contemplation is: 'I have total trust in Gurudev that I am able to do because of the power of God functioning within me.' It begins with this contemplation.

We all have the desire for God-realization. Baba said, "You are living because of the power of God, because of breath." So the moment you think that 'I am a disciple,' you are connected with the master, connected with the teachings of the master. The teachings are the real master, which are not confined to one personality; they are a series of personalities from God to your teacher, and even to you. The teachings are eternal. Previously I used to think that 'I am doing,' but now because of contemplation and

this little bit of higher awareness, I am aware that I am doing because the power of God is functioning in me.

A continuous connection with the master

Now see the change in your life. If you have the feeling that 'I am doing' without any contemplation or awareness then you are living with ego and mind. For example, when you think, 'I am living,' 'I am cooking,' 'I am feeding,' 'I am happy,' 'I am helping,' 'I am doing *seva*'— all of these thoughts indicate that you are forgetting the power of God is functioning. So now the sense of discipleship brings the awareness that 'I' am doing because the power of God is functioning. You may now think: I am aware that I am a disciple, and immediately I am connected with the master. As soon as I am connected with the master I am tapping the power of God. When I think and contemplate and when I am aware of the teachings of the master, immediately the teachings of the master bring me the awareness of God functioning. It is the guru who takes you to the truth or who brings truth to you.

To get this awareness, ask, "Who am I?" Before being a disciple I was completely ignorant. The awareness of the master immediately brings me closer to God. This step is the beginning of spiritual life. Spiritual practice is being aware in every action that it is the power of God functioning. Contemplate on these two sentences: 'I am not doing.' 'I am doing because of the power of God.

Contemplate and analyze how much time in a day that you are doing physical or mental action with the awareness that 'I am doing,' and how much time you are aware that, 'I am doing because of the power of God.' This awareness that I am doing with the power of God is still one state, concept, or idea; realization is far away. So we are not talking about realization; we have not even gone there. Yet, still we can practice this continuous awareness. This is spiritual life.

Spiritual life begins when we are aware of some power of God, which we don't know, which we don't perceive, which we have not yet realized, but we are aware that it is the power of God functioning. So now, 'I am doing,' is changed to, 'I am doing with the power of God.' First is, 'I am a disciple.' The moment I am a disciple I want to learn and I am to follow my master. The moment I am to follow my master, I am connected to his teachings. In every breath watch that He is doing it all. This awareness that God is functioning, increases.

From disciple to devotee

The next stage is from, 'I' am not doing. God is doing through me. The sense of doer-ship is now changed. In spiritual life, you become aware that you are doing because of the power of God, but now the sense of doer-ship is changed to the witness. It becomes, 'I' am not the doer; God is doing. God is doing every action through me. In this stage you contemplate deeply. This is the practical aspect of spiritual teachings and practice. The awareness is changed to, God is doing through me. In the awareness that 'I' am doing with the power of God, the sense of 'I' is there, although it is connected to the power of God. In this stage of 'I' am doing with the power of God, makes you a real disciple because you are following the master.

Who is a disciple? It is one who follows and is loyal to the master. The disciple's thinking changes to practicing what the master says. There is more awareness of the step that 'I' am not doing, God is doing through me. You then start to realize that you are not doing the service, the seva, and that God has given you this opportunity to serve. The awareness goes beyond 'God is doing' to 'God is serving through me.' The I-ness is changed to my-ness. That is, through me, through my life, through my hands, through my attitude, through my service, God is doing. What happens now is that the disciple becomes a devotee. When the devotee no longer has the sense of 'I' and instead has a sense of my-ness and 'God is doing,' then life is devoted. You become a true devotee when there is no sense of ego or 'I' and you realize that God is doing everything.

If you think, 'I' am a normal person there is a feeling of 'I am doing,' which means the ego is present. This will change if you think, 'I am a disciple.' Disciple means 'I' am doing because of the power of God. Thinking, 'I' am a devotee gives the sense of 'I' not being present. Life is more devoted when you think that God is doing everything.

Part – II
Date: May 29, 2003, Miami

As a seeker's spirituality develops, their life and consciousness changes. A seeker moves from being a disciple to a devotee. In the life of a disciple, there is awareness of love, and a willingness to love, but the real love comes into life when a disciple becomes devotee.

Devotee means, 'everything belongs to God.' A devotee has the attitude: I have nothing; God has given us this life, this beautiful human body, to love him, to serve him, to think of him, to thank him, to be grateful to him, to praise him, and to sing his glories.' More and more love comes in the life of a devotee and life is devoted at His feet.

So the feeling of 'I am doing,' now changes to 'I am doing because of power of God.' Then it further transforms to 'God is doing everything through me.' Now the next step: the state of Realization, when there is no existence of 'I,' i.e. I-ness or no existence of mine or my-ness. Only God is doing. So this is the basic outline of spirituality. Remember these four sentences. This is spiritual evolution.

1. I am doing.
2. I am doing, because of power of God, which makes me a disciple.
3. God is doing everything through me. I become a devotee.
4. God is doing.

So in the fourth stage, there is no sense of I-ness or my-ness. Everything belongs to God. Baba always said, 'You watch, God is doing every activity through you. He is eating food, not you.' This is not a simple sentence. Was God eating food? Why will God eat food? Baba also says that, 'You are not washing the body. God is washing the body. God is getting the washing. God is giving the washing to Himself. Remember this sentence. That means, He is doing. If He is doing, then we have to ask, who am I? What am I doing?

The answer to that question is: I am just the witness. This is called *sakshi bhava*. I am remaining in the state of consciousness. When I am conscious of God and His action, then I have no action. So, when I have no action, I have no karma. I am not bound; I am not binding myself to the world. Freedom!

So remember these four stages of spiritual evolution. If you consider these four sentences, these are the teachings are enough for one's whole life. You may learn anything, you may learn any scripture, but these are the essence. This is the basis of spirituality.

Now you can assess yourself. Where are you: Between one and two, or two and three, or three and four? Where are you standing? When we are totally unconscious, most of the time we feel that we are doing, we are connected with the body, with the mind, with the sense organs, with attitude, and with the thoughts. In this state there is bondage, anger, pride, emotions and restlessness. But when you are more and more aware that 'I am a disciple,' that 'God is doing,' 'I am doing because of His power,' 'God is functioning,' then this awareness makes you free from tension, restlessness, anger, cruelty, negative emotions, or negative qualities. They will arise, but you will be free from them.

Previously I used to get angry about some situations, but now the same situation does not bring that anger in me. You can feel the change in your life. We cannot change the world; we cannot change the external situations. The only thing we can change is our life: what we see, what we think, and so on.

In the first stage, one is absolutely connected with the body-mind. The second stage, one is connected with the teachings of the Master. When one is connected with the teachings of the Master, one is connected to the Master and receives blessings from the Master and knows 'I am a disciple.' I am trying to follow Gurudev, the Masters, the teachers. As we follow Gurudev more and more, we are increasingly connected to God and the sense that 'I am not doing. He is doing. He is doing through me.' Then you get one state - a continuous awareness. No more forgetfulness.

Contemplate these four points. Spiritual life is just a process, a natural evolution. We meditate and we practice spiritual discipline to reach the goal quicker. We all will reach the goal, no doubt. No question about it. The great poet, Rumi, once wrote a beautiful poem stating that he was in minerals, then he became water, then he became some insects, then some plants, then he became some animals, and then he was a human being. Maybe after some time, he wrote, he would be a superhuman being. It is a step-by-step spiritual evolution. We all are proceeding towards the goal. Sincerity in spiritual practice accelerates spiritual evolution, taking us closer to the goal, and taking us closer to Truth.

You may think that if you will reach the goal, then there is no need of spiritual practice: 'I can do as I like.' Many people in the world don't feel a need for spirituality. They just enjoy their life, doing as they like. If you think that there is no need of spiritual practice if I am eventually going to reach the goal, remember that spiritual practice is for those who feel the need of it, and it is not for everybody. You cannot feed a person who is not hungry. Those who feel that they want to get real peace, real joy, real love, real happiness, for them there is a need for spirituality. For them there is discipline because they want to be disciples, they want to be devotees, and they want to realize the Truth.

When you analyze your mind, you will notice that sometimes you want to be sincere, you want to meditate, but sometimes your mind takes you towards the material world and you think there is no need to meditate. Perhaps you decide to go out to a restaurant or to some other place. This happens to everybody. There is an outward struggle, but inwardly there is truth. We all have this desire to get the truth, which is hidden in our subconscious mind. Even a person not practicing any spiritual discipline, not meditating, not praying to God, has a deepest desire for God. It is hidden in the subconscious mind and is the only goal of human life. People may not feel the need for it, but it is there. The desire is there. You can have the desire for God, desire for truth, but the deepest desire for God, the deepest desire for truth is not at your hand, not at your will. It comes in time with the blessings of God and Masters. More and more we feel the necessity to be spiritual, more and more we feel 'I want to get to Truth'. This desire is there. The desire is not getting stronger and stronger, the desire is there, it is your willingness that is getting stronger.

Then at some point this desire arises on the surface and then your life becomes restless for God, for Truth. You then feel no attraction or attachment to do anything in the material world. Your whole life becomes restless for God only. This is a natural process. You should keep your awareness and attention higher: pray to God, pray to Gurudev, "O Lord, O Gurudev, bless me, guide me. Make my desire for Thee strongest."

Spiritual life is just a life of awareness. Baba often says, "All the time He is with you and anything you do, it is done by Him. The good you do, it is done by God. The bad you do, it is also done by God. Anything you do, it is done by Him. Anything you enjoy, it is done by Him." This is life. Anything we do is done because of the power of God. Anything we do is done by the will of God. Only because of ignorance, because of *ajnana vidya*, do we say, "I am doing," or "I can do this." But everything is done because of the power and will of God.

So let us be sincere in our practice, in our meditation, which will bring more and more awareness into our life. The awareness that, 'I am doing through the power of God,' will slowly change to, 'God is doing through me.' Your life should float between stage two and three, and it means that you are progressing in your spiritual life. 'I am doing because of power of God,' and 'God is doing through me.' Then you will find that actually you are not doing anything, it is just power of God functioning. This awareness that, 'I am doing because of power of God,' and, 'God is doing through me,' is meditation. To practice this meditation, you practice some spiritual disciplines for some time. This is the real practice.

Part – III
Date: May 29, 2003

I have learned from my own practice and association with saints and sages that to get quick spiritual evolution you must feel that you are alone and that you are with God and the masters. When you are alone is when you feel them with you. So be conscious of this. When we live or interact with others there is a tendency to forget God and the masters. However, the sense of loneliness naturally brings the awareness of God and masters. This is the true company — company of the Self, company of God, company of the master. To get this company you must be very selective in whom you seek, because we live in a world that is a mixture of truth and delusion. The delusion is so forceful that it covers up the truth. Living in the material world we have to interact with worldly people who don't necessarily feel a need for spirituality. They live to just experience enjoyment.

When we live and work with others we have some responsibilities. Even in spiritual organizations one has responsibilities. You have to be in contact with many people and face some situations that you may not like. You may question why you cannot just sit and meditate and not face these difficulties. It is part of your responsibility and you have to do it. This is when the sense of aloneness helps. Although physically you may be around many people, mentally think that you are only with your Self, always with your master, always with God. This minimizes the company.

People often ask how to get balance when they experience difficultly living in society with people who are not spiritual and have completely opposite views. They say they do not want to work. However, this is not practical. Kriya Yoga teachings are more practical. I point out to them that they may only work eight to ten hours in the day with people who are not spiritually inclined and thus, have difficulty maintaining awareness of God. The remaining fourteen to sixteen hours they can be alone. So take care of these precious hours when you are mostly alone and think only of God and masters and your Self. Don't complain about others and the eight to ten hours of work. The mistake made by people is that they want to bring the balance immediately to their work hours and not give much importance to the other fourteen to sixteen precious hours. So when you give more importance to this time and more importance to contemplation, meditation, and awareness that you are always alone, this is truth. When you feel "I am always alone," then immediately you feel that you are with God. There is no doubt that God and masters are always with us.

The question is how much are we with God and the masters. Awareness of being with them develops when you feel that you are alone. When your work has finished be in the company of people who inspire you to be spiritual. Do those things that bring more awareness of God to your life. When you take care of these hours the blessings of God and masters will take care of the rest. Then you begin to feel that spiritual life is very natural. Natural life is spiritual. Natural life is divine because our life is not our life: it is the life of God. Any moment God may take it back. You do not know how to live in this world. You don't know how long you will live in this world, but the truth is that you will live in God always. Whether you live in this world or not, live in God all the time. Once you are conscious of that, then you are eternal. Eternally you are the child of God.

The soul is immortal. To realize the immortality and true nature of the soul maintain the consciousness that 'I am a disciple.' When you are conscious that you are a disciple it will eventually develop into experiencing that 'I am a devotee.' A disciple is a person whose life is associated with God. A devotee is a person who has devoted his life totally to God and the masters. In this state, there is awareness that the power of God is doing everything. The devotee realizes the truth, that 'I am the soul. I am the child of God.' Be conscious and contemplate deeply within. Ask yourself, "Where am I? Where am I standing?"

The first thing is to realize, "I am doing." Secondly, "I am doing because of the power of God, which is being a disciple." Thirdly, "God is doing through me as a devotee. I am a devotee." Lastly, "God is doing everything. I have nothing. I know nothing; everything belongs to God. He is doing. I am the child of God. I am God in human being. He and I are one. I am *atma-brahma. so'ham. tattvamasi* — You are That." This is your true identity.

Close your eyes and contemplate within — Who am I? Contemplate that although you have some desire for God, why is it not stronger? How to develop deepest desire for God? It develops when your life floats between disciple and devotee, between 'shishya' and 'bhakta.' A devotee of Gurudev is a disciple. A disciple of God is a devotee. To realize that you are a child of God, you must realize that you are a devotee of God. To realize that you are a devotee of God, you must be aware that you are a disciple of your master; you are a disciple of Gurudev. To realize that you are a disciple of your Gurudev, always be alone. Seclusion is the price of liberty. Seclusion is the price of greatness. Keep company to a minimum. Minimum company brings maximum awareness. Be aware that you are alone and feel that masters are with you, God is with you.

At all times God and masters are with you. Every moment you are a disciple and a devotee. Every moment you are connected to the masters, to God. If every moment you are conscious continuously, then the blessings of masters will bring the realization of Truth. Realize the truth and the blessings of God that you are a child of God. This is meditation. Meditation is having the consciousness that every moment you are a disciple. Meditation is constant awareness that you are a devotee. Meditation is realizing every moment, 'I am a child of God,' which is nothing but realization of the Absolute. Keep trying with more and more force to get the highest desire of God. Contemplate more and more. Be aware. Continuous awareness brings the consciousness of the truth. *chit-satta* — "I am conscious of my eternal existence in God. I am conscious of eternal existence of God in me. I am the father, the father is in me." That is life divine. This life is not yours; it is the life of God.

Thank you all. God bless you. My deepest love to each of you.

Om Amen
na guroradhikam
na guroradhikam
guru kripa hi kevalam

Part – IV
Date: May 30, 2003

OM….OM….OM….
yasya prasada bhagvat prasado, yasya prasada nagatiktopi
dhyayan stuvanta sarva shanti sallno
vande guru sri charnarvindam
vande guru sri hariharanandam
vande guru sri charnarvindam
sansar davanal nil loka, tranayakaro nehnaya ghanatvam
pradaysya kalyan gun aan asya, vande guru sri charanarvindam.
vande guru sri hariharanandam
vande guru sri charnarvindamvande guru sri charnarvindam
vande guru sri charnarvindam

"Always at the feet of Gurudev, always at the feet of the master. You are the immortal child of God. You should know your true identity. Continuously you have to be aware of your true identity. At every moment, be conscious."

Eternally you are the child of God. Eternally you have to be conscious of your identity. Eternally God is with you and eternally you have to be with God. Eternally there is existence of God. You have to be conscious of the eternal existence of God. You have to be conscious of the eternal existence of God within. God within you is the soul; you are that — *tattvamasi*.

To realize that "I am the child of God," first be a disciple of the master. To become the ideal devotee of God, every moment you have to learn. You have to learn continuously until your life becomes synonymous with devotion. Learning comes from mind and intelligence. The more you learn, the more you will follow your master and then, more love and devotion will come. Real knowledge cultivates humbleness, love, devotion, and dedication in the heart which, in turn, develops the heart. As dedication grows, life becomes devotion. Knowledge is devotion. To get this knowledge, you have to be a disciple. To get devotion, you have to be devotee. Devotion brings true knowledge, which is knowledge of the Self, knowledge of God and the eternal existence of God — the eternal existence of God within me, within others, within all — and knowledge that, eternally, I belong to God. So, when I realize that I *am* nothing and *have* nothing but God, then I love God. That is the true knowledge, which brings deep love. This love is devotion felt within the heart.

Development in mind and intelligence develops the heart. Development in the heart frees you from the mind and intelligence. Any knowledge, which does not build humbleness and love in the heart, is not real knowledge. Knowledge is not just information. True knowledge should bring upon transformation in the heart.

Potentially we all are divine. Our true nature is the divine nature. Our true nature is love. This love is hidden by the sheath of delusion. The sheath of delusion stops us from being aware of the truth, even though we are the immortal children of God.

The more we learn, the more we follow the teachings of the master. The more we are connected to the master, the less we are connected to the world. The more we are connected to the master, the more the blessings of the master will come into our lives to clean the astral world. This connection also cleans the mind and intelligence. These blessings of the master will remove the sheath of delusion, which has covered our true nature. When love in the heart becomes full, life is devoted to God. God and master are one. When life is devoted as a fruit of God with the grace of the master, you become a devotee of God.

To be a real devotee of God, you have to be the best possible disciple of your master. Remember, you can be a devotee of God only by the grace of the master. The grace of the master comes to life when you follow him, when you follow his teachings, when you practice his teachings, as best as you can. The deepest desire, the deepest love for Gurudev guides me in every moment.

Pray to the master: "I am so helpless. My mind and thoughts are so restless. They always try to make me unaware of my true nature. They are always trying to distract me away from this truth. They are always trying to keep me away from your teachings. O Gurudev, I am helpless. Bless me, O Lord! Bless me, Gurudev. I'll follow your teachings all the time. Guide me."

So let this prayer be continuous. Let the continuous thought of prayers flow from the mind in every moment, in every action. This continuous flow of prayerful thoughts will bring awareness. The key to being the best disciple is to follow the master. The best disciple is one whose life is devoted to the master and to his teachings. When your life is devoted to the master, then by the blessings and grace of Gurudev, your life will be devoted to God. Before that, devotion to God has no meaning. If you are not devoted to the master, how will you be devoted to God? If you cannot devote yourself to the person, and to his teachings, which you know, how will you devote your life to God, who is formless, and whom you don't know? To realize that you are the child of God, you must be a devotee of God, and to realize that you are a devotee of God, you must be a successful disciple. To be a successful disciple, you must have this desire, the deepest desire to surrender to the master. "O Gurudev! Always I am at thy feet. Rescue me. Help me." This is the way of life.

Spiritual life is nothing but a life of this continuous awareness, a way of keeping this desire continuously. As Gurudev used to say, "Every moment, concentrate on the fontanel, feel that it is the power of God functioning." So every moment, you have to be sincere. You'll have to follow the master. This one sentence is the essence of all teachings.

Always, it is the power of God functioning. Spiritual life begins with belief — strong belief in the presence of God. Although it is the truth that it is the presence of God and the power of God functioning in all, still we have no realization. It is still only a concept, a theory. So for whom are you searching? You don't know how to search. When a devotee, a disciple, or a spiritual person is searching for the truth, what are they searching for? Ultimately you are searching for your own Self.

The following story comes to mind. There was a master and many disciples. One disciple asked the master how to get constant happiness: "I am not getting this happiness. You tell us that God is always with us, that you always have to be happy, to be conscious of the presence of God. I am trying to feel that, but I don't experience this constant happiness. I think that I have to detach myself from the world to experience this happiness."

The master replied, "I can tell you how to get this constant happiness. I'll give you one month. Go into the world and visit the people. If you can find one person who is always happy, ask him and he will tell you. If he does not tell you, come back to me and I'll tell you. So I'll give you one month. Just go and look for a person, who is always happy."

So now this disciple travelled through the country. He spent a month meeting many people, different types of people, from different walks of life. He thought, "Let me go to the richest person in the land. He should be happy because he has everything." So when he went to the richest person and asked him, "Are you always happy?"

The richest man replied, "I? No. I have so many troubles, so many difficulties. Just now, I have come from the office where I've had lots of trouble with the employees. I am not happy."

So the disciple thought, "Oh! I thought that this person would be happy." So he went to the king, thinking that the king should be happy. He asked the king, "Are you happy?"

The king replied, "No. Everyday, my problems increase, and there are many responsibilities. I am not happy."

In this way, the disciple searched far and wide, but did not find a person, who was always happy. Then he saw a monk who seemed to be happy. "Are you happy?"
"Yes, I am happy."
"Are you always happy?'
"Yes, always I am happy."
"Can you please tell me how you manage to always be happy?"
Then the monk said, "You go back to your master. He will teach you how to always be happy."

Now the disciple came back to the master and told him, "I saw many people, the powerful, the rich, the successful, and the famous, but they were not really happy. Then I saw a monk who said that he was always happy and he did not tell me the secret of his happiness. He said that you, Oh Master, would tell me the secret of happiness."

The master then told the disciple the secret of the happiness: "When you search for this happiness, you expect something either from matter, from spirit, or from God — either from the material world, or from the spiritual world. We all have some expectation to get some happiness. But when you look for this happiness, if you examine the force behind your searching, in truth, you will find that you are not

searching for happiness. If you examine the force behind your searching, that force will bring you real happiness."

According to the Kriya teachings, the same thing applies: In everything we do there is a force behind that action; that force is the power of God. So, when you are searching for anything, search for the real force behind that search, which is the life force. This life force is the *prana-shakti*, which is the presence of God, the power of God, that is nothing but the Self, and only that Self can bring real happiness to life.

Part – V

When one is established in the Self, there are no longer any expectations in life because there is nothing else to gain, everything is within. You are the center of the whole creation. The power of God is remaining within each of us. Thus, the center of happiness is within. We are all in the nucleus of happiness. In spite of knowing this, it is not so clear. People often ask how they can attain happiness from within? Generally people have sought to get happiness through physical or emotional means by engaging in activities or from other people. Real happiness is beyond that worldly state because you live at the source of happiness and bliss. The power of God, *sat-cit-ananda* (existence, consciousness, bliss), the soul, is within us. The real *ananda* is the bliss of the highest order, the source of all happiness, pleasure, and joy. We do not need to search for this joy because we already are that *ananda* (bliss). To get that sense of *ananda*, that happiness, is bliss. We have to be conscious of the eternal existence of God. The eternal existence of God within is the soul and *so'ham* ("I am that").

In the *ham* (body), I am *sa* (soul). In the *ham* mind, I am the *sa* consciousness. So we have to go back to the source. Our true nature is that we are the children of God. And that happiness is the highest happiness, bliss, joy, and pleasure that you can attain from your own Self - infinite joy and bliss that are beyond expression. The mind cannot think the joy of the soul and the joy of God because the mind is limited to matter, the body and the world. That which is beyond the mind, cannot be thought. You can realize it through the grace of God and masters when you know that you are a child of God. To realize that you are a child of God, be a devotee of God. To be a devotee of God, be a disciple of the master and be sincere in your practice.

Progress in spiritual life is evident when cheerfulness experienced in life. That which is within comes out. If you are cheerful, you will always be cheerful in your mind, mental expression, and physical expression. This is the divine and natural quality. Children generally have a cheerful outlook and are loving. When a child needs something, he simply expresses his will. A child who is hungry will cry and the mother immediately comes to feed the child. Both mother and child have a natural connection.

Lord Jesus used to sing, "So be like a child." The child deserves the entire kingdom of God.

We have passed through millions of lives. The scriptures declare that there is a continuous process life after life. In each life we progress a particular amount. Each birth begins with being a born as a loving child who grows. This process continues until one's life is successful and there is no second birth. However, for most people they are born as a child again after death. Although we grow physically, mentally, and intellectually, the childlike attitude somehow persists because a child is closer to God and the mother. So the real child is a devotee. The loving nature of a small baby is the same nature that occurs when real love is in our hearts. In this state we naturally like God and masters and they like us. When this love develops in the heart, the person becomes a devotee and the devotee becomes a child of God. The real love develops in the heart and the life is full of devotion. A devotee of God is the child of God. A child is one who has a closeness to God in the heart - who loves God and who pursues God's love. God likes everyone. We are all His children. But are we aware of this? When one is aware that he is a child of God, love grows. When love is in the heart, the life becomes devoted to God and masters and you become the eternal child of God.

So, we are just passing. That which has not happened for us, has already happened to others. That which is our future has already passed for God and the masters. The unit of time in this world is not the same as in other worlds and planes of existence. Highly spiritual people and realized masters remain in this world, but they also remain in other planes of existence. For example, once I was eating a mango in Bhisindipur ashram and fifteen days earlier Baba had written a letter talking about the delicious mango that I had tasted. Although I had not yet eaten the mango, he had already seen it happen. He had crossed that time zone. What was future for me had already passed for Baba. Everything has already happened for God. The entire creation is the thought of God, for His pleasure and enjoyment. Nothing is considered present or future for Him. Everything is past, because it is already done. It is said in the scriptures that the moment God contemplated to be many and to get happiness from His own creation, it happened. Similarly, in our dream state we enjoy beautiful things, eat delicious food, are wealthy, everything is going well, and so on. The experience is so alive and vivid, but the moment we awaken there is no existence of these experiences.

The scriptures, saints, and sages declare that this creation is also a dream. However, we are unable to comprehend with our limited minds how this creation could be a dream. We perceive this world so nicely, so colorful, so beautiful, how this could be an illusion? It all seems so real. But illusion makes us believe the untruth as truth. Although the experiences in the dream seem so alive, you realize upon waking that it was just a dream. The experience of reality is a state of no dream.

At some level of existence we are sleeping and dreaming. When we awaken from within we realize that our lives are also a dream, an illusion. Our limited mind cannot comprehend and go beyond this illusion. It is difficult to comprehend that that this world and our relationship to it is an illusion and is not permanent. This is due to attachment to the world and the body. Our body is a microcosm of the whole cosmos. That which is in the whole cosmos, is also in the whole body. The body is subjected to matter as is the world. There is a very strong relationship between the body and the world. The body wants to play with the world; the world wants to play with the body. But who am I? Where is the body when I am sleeping? Where was I before being born? Where did you go during sleep? Every day we all experience this state of sleep and the happiness attained from it. We think that we get happiness through the contact of the body and the world or the mind and the world. But this happiness is nothing. The real happiness we get is from the sleep. During sleep we go back to our own true nature. After working throughout the day, we get tired and want to rest and sleep to get real happiness. To get real happiness you want to free yourself from the body, mind, and world. You do not want all the worldly things or the body. You want to be totally free. This is the sense of spirituality.

Part – VI

To experience real happiness, you must be free from the body, the mind, and the world and be conscious. This is meditation. In sleep, do I exist? Physically the body is there during sleep, but there is no awareness of the body, mind, world, intelligence, spirituality, practice — nothing. I am there because I exist — I am the soul, I am the son of God.

When I sleep, I go back to God. When I am awakened, I should have God consciousness. This is life. Every day we experience this state in deep sleep. One-third of our lives (the time we sleep), we experience this state. To get real happiness, we must make ourselves free from the body, mind, thoughts, intelligence, ego, the world. So, one-third of our lives, we are already realized and the two-thirds of life, we have to realize. What to realize? Realize that — Eternally God is existing in me and eternally I exist in God. That is the only truth, all other things are illusion. To get that truth, in waking state, this awareness should be continuous. Anything you do, it is because of the power of God, because of the will of God. Our will is nothing but a tiny fraction of the will of God. So nothing happens without the will of God. Your mind may not accept this, but nothing has happened, nothing happens, nothing will happen, without the will of God.

I will give you a beautiful example. There was a great, highly realized monk: a great devotee of God. At the end of his life he had a lot of diseases in his body and suffered from a lot of pain, but he was always happy.

The disciples told the monk, "Gurudev, you are suffering a lot. When we see your suffering, we are also feeling the pain. Why are you not praying to God, to be free from the diseases and the pain? When we, the disciples, are in pain or suffer from diseases you pray for us, and as a result, we are free from the diseases and the pain. Then why are you not praying for yourself?" The monk replied, "How can I pray to God to remove this illness? Everything is done by the will of God. If I am praying to God to remove my illness, my pain, am I not going against the will of God? I believe in Him. I have complete trust in God. If I have complete trust in Him, how can I pray for this to God?"

Those who have complete trust in God, can they pray for anything or for something like this? Those who do not believe in God, they pray to God. Those who completely believe in God, they cannot pray. They can only pray, "O Lord! Bless me so that I may never forget Thee. O Lord, bless me to love Thee. O Lord, bless to remember Thee all the time. O Lord, bless me to perceive Thee always." They cannot pray for anything else. So those who completely believe in God cannot pray and those who pray to God do not believe in God. This seems to be very strange. It seems contradictory to say that those who pray to God do not believe in God. It may seem that I am saying that only those who have faith can pray. People who have total faith in God cannot pray for anything except love. They would pray like, "O Lord, keep me always at Thy feet. O Lord, bless me that I will always think of Thee, that I'll love Thee, that I'll feel Your presence, that I'll feel Your presence within me, that I'll feel Your presence in others also." This is the prayer, which is not asking for other things. So what we need is spiritual practice, discipline, meditation, and continuous awareness. We need to have total faith in God. We can have total faith in God when we are at the feet of God, when we completely devote our lives to God. It is His duty now.

After teaching the eighteen chapters in Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna,

सर्व धर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

"You leave everything, and surrender unto Me. I will liberate thee."

Lord Krishna does not say this in the beginning. He could have said this in the beginning when Arjuna was in delusion. But he says this only after eighteen chapters of teachings on how we should live and how much we should practice. If a guru like Shri Krishna needs to teach eighteen chapters to a disciple like Arjuna, then who are we? So our life, which is a disciple's life, is a life of learning, a life of practice. The more you learn, the more you practice, the more you follow the master, the more you follow the guru, your life would be more devoted and would be surrendered. Once life is surrendered, there is no practice required. He will take care. It becomes the duty, the responsibility of God. The thoughts of a devotee should be: I have not created myself. I have not created this delusion. The delusion should be removed by the one who created the delusion. This world, this body, is created by God and so it is His responsibility to care for me. I have nothing to do. The sense of ego is thus finished. When the sense of ego, that I am a disciple, I am practicing to get the truth is finished, life is devoted, and then He takes care. As a disciple, we should be more sincere about practice, about discipline, about our sincerity, about

our detachment (*vairagya*) — this is the life of a disciple. The question is, for how long? At some point of time, the life would be completely dedicated at the feet of God. You become a devotee of God and then you have no more practice, no more spirituality, no more discipline. When you become a devotee of God, totally surrendered at the feet of God, your life will be one with God. Then you will realize that "I am a child of God" and that "I am eternally one with Him."

We are to start our spiritual life now. Everything that has happened until now is in the past. Through practice, discipline, and continuous awareness of the presence of God everywhere we will eventually attain that oneness with God. It can happen in the next moment, after a few days, or after a few lives.

Spiritual life is just a life of awareness, life of truth, life of dedication. With a sense of dedication, your practice will be stronger, more sincere. The more sincere you are, the more your life will be dedicated to God. When life is dedicated to God, He will take care. So let us keep this awareness, keep this attitude continuously. There will be a moment in life, when you will realize that you are already realized.

Let us contemplate deeply. There is only eternity. What is future for you, which is not yet done for you, is already done for God. We all are divine. The power of God is hidden in each of us. It is the force behind our search. It is the force behind our practice, whatever practice we do. Be aware of the force behind your practice. That is Truth. You are not here to get something through your search. We are here to search the force behind our searching, which is the power of God, the soul. You are That — *tattvamasi*. We all are the divine children of God. To realize that I am a child of God, you have to be completely free from the sense of "I" and "mine" — I-ness and my-ness. The attitude of the devotee is, "I have nothing and I know nothing. I am nothing, it is only God." The devotee has total devotion, which is filled with love, unconditional love. The devotee of God deserves to realize that "I am a child of God." To attain that state of devotion, you should be very sincere as a disciple. It requires practice (*abhyasa)* and detachment (*vairagya*). Everything is delusion, untrue, a dream. The world is a dream. We are still sleeping and have to awaken. We have to get nothing from this world, only from God, the Soul. Sincerity, detachment, and discipline is essential. The life of a disciple is to completely follow the teachings of the master, to have the deepest desire for God, to have deepest faith in God. Deepest desire for God makes one disciple, deepest faith in God makes one a devotee of a God. That deepest faith in God reveals the divinity of "I am That." All is "That." — *soham, tattvamasi, sarvam khalvidam, brahman*. I am the child of God. I am created by God, I am the child of God. You are created by God; you are the child of God. The whole creation is created by God. Have discipline. Be a disciple. Have total faith and devotion, be a devotee. Realize that you are the immortal child of God.

na guroradhikam
na guroradhikam
guru kripa hi kevalam
bhagvad kripa hi kevalam